

Spiritual Guidance

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Spiritual guidance

General principle

At The Staffordshire Schools Multi Academy Trust, the spiritual dimension of life is expressed essentially through the Christian faith and through recognition of the spiritual nature of mankind. Pupils' individual spiritual development is fostered throughout the curriculum, in particular in Religious Education, with Collective worship, a spiritual activity of response to God, providing a daily context to explore the spiritual search of mankind and spiritual experience form within the Christian faith.

Legal requirements

The spiritual dimension has been one of the areas of experience long since identified in curriculum development, alongside the moral, the aesthetic, the linguistic, the mathematical, the technological and the physical. It is a cross-curricular dimension which can be fostered in educational endeavour through aspects such as creativity, relationships, emotions, self-knowledge, meaning and purpose, transcendence, awe, mystery wonder and beliefs. Its importance is recognised by OFSTED, who seek to make judgements on how pupils are responding to this area of experience and how schools are accounting for provision and enabling spiritual sensitivities to be fostered. Its relationship to the moral, social and cultural dimensions is affirmed.

The spiritual boundaries in our Trust are determined by school's Church status. This provides a framework within Christianity and other religions, which adhere to similar values and principles and affirm the spiritual essence and vision of all religious experience. Nothing which dishonours the Anglican Foundation of the these schools will be considered appropriate to be included within the spiritual curriculum of any Trust school.

Aims of spirituality

- ◆ To foster the spiritual development of each pupil, regardless of age, ability, sex or cultural background;
- ◆ To value the inner self;
- ◆ To foster reflection, meditation and stillness;
- ◆ To value the spiritual search of mankind;
- ◆ To recognise the important religious landmarks that mark stages on the individual's spiritual journey;
- ◆ To foster a reverential attitude to the Divine (God);
- ◆ To encourage imagination, creativity and a sense that there is 'more to life than meets the eye';
- ◆ To foster empathy for others as feeling, thinking individuals;
- ◆ To appreciate how important beliefs are to adherents, in such a way that their behaviour and lifestyle are affected;
- ◆ To foster a sense of meaning, purpose and direction in life;
- ◆ To share the Christian story;
- ◆ To respond to Christian festivals, rituals and symbols;
- ◆ To provide a context of faith, security and loving relationships to foster each child's spiritual search;
- ◆ To affirm the value of Christian belief.

Management of the spiritual dimension

All Trust staff take responsibility for this area of experience and account for the spiritual in planning and policies.

The Worship and R.E. leads recognise the special role their particular curriculum areas contribute to the spiritual curriculum.

The CEO, Governing Body and staff ensure that the spiritual is affirmed in the Mission Statement of the school, and in the values and principles consistent with the educational philosophy and methodologies prevalent in the Trust.

Individual assessment of pupils' spiritual development is not required, however, in line with the N.C. C. guidelines (National Curriculum Council), we do have expectations that pupils will grow in their ability to:

- ◆ Reflect on their experience with increasing sensitivity;
- ◆ Question and explore the meaning of experience;
- ◆ Understand and evaluate a range of possible responses and interpretations;
- ◆ Develop personal views and insight;
- ◆ Apply insights gained with increasing degrees of perception to their own lives in line with school's Anglican Foundation;
- ◆ Know that belief is valuable and Christian belief is endorsed by the Trust community.

Current practice

The spiritual curriculum is recognised in:

- ◆ Worship
- ◆ Assembly
- ◆ Ethos, values and the hidden curriculum
- ◆ R.E. curriculum
- ◆ Whole Trust curriculum
- ◆ Mission Statement
- ◆ Church/school links

It is accounted for through fostering spiritual sensitivities, attitudes and skills (Appendix 1). These can be articulated and communicated to one another in the Trust community and in documentation and lesson planning.

Any methodology for fostering such sensitivities needs to allow for the spontaneous moment in the child's experience, and in the daily life of the school, and develop strategies for capitalising on such occasions. In this way staff feel able to spend time on the 'spiritual moment' to the benefit of all concerned.

It is never possible to plan the whole spiritual curriculum – it would be a contradiction of the spiritual, which may touch us at any time and in unexpected ways.

Appendix 1

Spiritual sensitivities

- ♦ A sense of the mystery of life;
- ♦ A sense of awe and wonder;
- ♦ A sense of transcendence and an awareness of there being something more to life than meets the eye
- ♦ An imaginative approach to the world
- ♦ A reflective attitude to the natural world
- ♦ A sense of transience and change
- ♦ A spirit of enquiry and open mindedness
- ♦ An awareness that life involved moral choices between good and bad
- ♦ An awareness of paradox and unease
- ♦ A sense of life's joys and achievements
- ♦ A sense of meaning, purpose and direction
- ♦ An awareness of the dark side of life, of suffering, pain, decay and loss
- ♦ An awareness of community – its demands, values, rituals and celebrations
- ♦ An increasing ability to empathise with others
- ♦ The capacity to empathise and respond to religious activities such as worship, prayer, communion, sacrifice, pilgrimage, beliefs, symbolism
- ♦ The capacity to be still
- ♦ The capacity to be aware of one's own inner life and to reflect
- ♦ The capacity to be aware of one's own uniqueness, of the worth of one's self, and of one's identity
- ♦ An increasing awareness of God in one's own life and in the life of others
- ♦ The increasing ability to question one's beliefs, actions, and those of others in a search for meaning
- ♦ The ability to communicate responses and feelings with increasing confidence
- ♦ The ability to be challenged and inspired by the achievements of the human spirit
- ♦ A sense of justice
- ♦ An awareness of the importance of relationships within the natural world.

Spiritual skills of access and response

- ♦ Reflection
- ♦ Empathy
- ♦ Questioning
- ♦ Communicating
- ♦ Stilling
- ♦ Listening
- ♦ Interpretation
- ♦ Expression
- ♦ Awareness

Spiritual attitudes

- ♦ A reverential attitude to the Divine
- ♦ A reflective attitude to the natural world
- ♦ An empathetic attitude to others
- ♦ Positive attitudes to one's self, one's worth and one's identity
- ♦ An attitude of openness to the spiritual search

- ◆ Affirming attitudes towards belief in the life of adherents.